

Local and Personal.

"The Items" is not an unimportant feature in the daily newspaper. To prepare a *melange*, however, is not always an easy task, especially where matters of fact, and not fiction, are required for the local column. A pedestrian expedition over town, with eyes wide open, and a tongue ever inquiring, may yield scarcely anything but fatigue and disappointment. But it is not ever thus; a season of scarcity and leaniness is succeeded by one of plenty and fatness, when items on various subjects, richly spring up in every direction for the harvest.

We do not believe that any editor or reporter is so heartless as to desire a dreadful accident, or a tragic occurrence, or an extensive conflagration, merely for the sake of adding to the interest of his columns, but we do think we express a feeling that actuates every one engaged in the collection of news, when we say that if there is something shocking and disastrous, he wants to be the first to learn all the particulars, and promulgate the event. If the news-carrier is dull, the blame does not rest upon the editor of the press.

The editor is, it has been said, emphatically a representative of the present age—a new and remarkable growth of civilization, of "progress." As a generic characteristic of the class, an editorial paper, some time since, related a story of a provincial editor, who, discovering that one of his neighbors had hung himself, would not cut him down, nor mention the discovery to any one, but kept the body under lock and key for two whole days. His reason was simple and sufficient: his paper appeared on Thursday; the paper of his rival on Wednesday. "And do you think," he triumphantly asked, "I was going to say anything about the suicide, and let that scandalous have the paragraph?"

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Magnificent Improvement.—The plan of the city shows a circular space on the line of Pennsylvania avenue, near Georgetown. The center of this space is the point of intersection of the axis of Pennsylvania and New Hampshire avenues, and Twenty-third and K streets. The radius of the circle is 250 feet 8 inches, giving, therefore, an outer circumference on the house-line of 1,575 feet and an area of 4.53 acres.

Heretofore, in the grading of streets and avenues through the public spaces, so many of which occur in various parts of the city at the intersections of principal avenues and streets, the works have been carried continuously on, thereby converting those spaces into great deserts of (in summer time) hot sand and stone, instead of the pleasant little oases for which the authors of the city evidently designed them. It is a matter of congratulation that, at last, this bad practice is likely to be permanently abandoned.

The paving of Pennsylvania avenue from Rock Creek to Georgetown being commenced, the late President Fillmore approved a plan, submitted to him by Mr. R. Coyle, the gentleman to whom the general government, at the request of the corporate authorities, has entrusted the work of completing and revising the graduation and drainage of the city, which provides, within the great circle above referred to, a smaller circular enclosure, to be adorned in its centre with a fountain, and in its area with lawn and forest trees. The diameter of the enclosure is 320 feet, its circumference, therefore, 1,005 feet, and its area 1.816 acres. Gravelled walks, 14 feet wide, extend through the enclosure on the line of the axis of Pennsylvania avenue, and one on that of New Hampshire avenue. The plantations are to be so arranged as to leave the view for a width of 50 feet along the middle of each street and avenue unobstructed. The width of the circular road-way between the houses and the enclosure is 90 feet; the foot-way next to the houses being 20 feet wide; that next to the enclosure 14 feet wide, and the width of carriage-way 50 feet. This, of course, gives for available carriage-way around the circle, 112 feet, in lieu of 80 feet, which is the width from curb to curb on the avenue proper, west of seventeenth street. The government being the owner of the small triangular reservations, lying one on the south side of the avenue, at its eastern intersection with the circumference of the circle, and the other on the western circumference of the circle, and south side of the avenue, the circular road-way immediately at the right hand, turning from the avenue in each direction of travel, is to be 80 feet wide.

The improvement will be a very beautiful one, and has already increased the value of the property surrounding it. Its omission would be the continuance of a nuisance. It will offer to the pedestrian no interruption, or increase of distance, while it will give him pleasant shade and a resting spot near the fountain. To "the rich" who "ride in chairs," or the people who avail themselves of the omnibuses, it will increase the length, and, as a consequence, the pleasantness of their journey, the enormous distance of 77 yards!

We have seen the suggestion that an elliptical enclosure, with its longer axis on Pennsylvania avenue, would have been better than the circle. This is eccentric taste. If every one of the four wide streets and avenues which intersect there should claim the shorter axis of the ellipse, the inevitable conclusion would be to wipe out the enclosure entirely, and restore the supremacy of sand and cobble-stones. What a delightful "space" that would be with the thermometer at 97° in the shade!

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Important to Property Holders.—Although the result of the suit of Captain Stewart, recently concluded in the Circuit Court, is known to the public generally, it is not always an easy task, especially where matters of fact, and not fiction, are required for the local column. A pedestrian expedition over town, with eyes wide open, and a tongue ever inquiring, may yield scarcely anything but fatigue and disappointment. But it is not ever thus; a season of scarcity and leaniness is succeeded by one of plenty and fatness, when items on various subjects, richly spring up in every direction for the harvest.

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The Dueling Law.—On Thursday Mr. Geo. Stewart, (a master carpenter) made out for Justice Smith, that, on Wednesday, about noon, Mr. John Flaherty, (a master plasterer,) challenged him to fight a duel in the public street, near the City post office, that Flaherty produced two pistols from his pocket, inviting Stewart to take his choice, and that if he refused to fight, he (Flaherty) would have satisfaction, accompanying the performance with abusive language.

Flaherty was arrested, and on Thursday appeared before the Justice to answer for the offence, under the Anti-Dueling Law of February, 1839. His counsel was D. Ratcliffe, Esq.

P. B. Key, Esq., the recently appointed District Attorney, appeared on the part of the United States. Mr. Ratcliffe, in opening the examination, contended that this was not such a case as is contemplated by the law of Congress, but might be attributed to childish impulse and foolish passion; a mere brag, superinduced by a glass or so of liquor. The effect of such proceedings as those was only to enlarge the lawyers' fees. "What," Stewart said, "did I do?" Directly the suggestion was made, he ran off to a magistrate and entered complaint. He is a hard-working mechanic, and had too much sense to fight Flaherty—that mechanic there, with his linen coat on. If Congressmen should find out that workmen fight duels, they would repeal the law instantly; for it was made for them and not for us. [Laughter.] The law says "deadly weapons." I suppose that if two woodsmen should get into a quarrel, and one of them dare the other to combat with sticks of wood, they too, would be arrested to answer under the anti-duelling law! Preposterous. The law was only made to apply where there is a formal challenge, deliberation, and the usual preliminaries to such a contest, which are not here exhibited." He further contended that there was no ground to hold the defendant under that law.

Mr. Key replied, saying that Mr. Ratcliffe had endeavored to gloss over the affair by ingenious remarks. But the law of Congress aimed at cases like this. Flaherty did show a deliberate purpose, having been in search of Stewart for twelve or twenty-four hours; and when he met him, presented two pistols, inviting him to take one of them and fight. The gentleman on the other side asserted that it was a mere brag. All challenges are brags. It makes no difference whether a note is sent to the effect: "Sir, my honor has been wounded, and you must give me the satisfaction a gentleman has a right to ask," or whether a party is verbally challenged. What is the difference between the two kinds of challenges, except in the mode? Certainly none as to principle. He condemned the proceedings of Flaherty as strong terms, and reproached that means of acquiring notoriety. The public would not now think better of Flaherty than they did before the occurrence of Wednesday; in fact, people whose opinions were worth having, would not esteem him so highly.

Several witnesses were then called, (including the complainant,) who proved, among other things the fact of Flaherty meeting Stewart and offering him a choice of pistols to settle a business difficulty; and it was further elicited, in evidence, that the former distinctly avowed that he only desired an equal, and not an *ex parte* shooting, and had provided himself with weapons under the apprehension that Stewart would do so.

It not appearing to the satisfaction of Justice Smith that Flaherty was amenable to the anti-duelling law, he required the defendant to give bail in the sum of a thousand dollars to keep the peace.

Stoves.—The season is nigh at hand when these necessary articles will be called into use, and it is desirable for housekeepers and others to know where best they can be obtained. At the Washington Stove Manufacturing every variety will be found and of the first description.

Latest from New York.—A very large, important, and enthusiastic meeting was held Thursday evening, in Metropolitan Hall, New York, to present a public testimonial to Captain Ingraham, of the U. S. Sloop-of-war "Albatross," for his gallant conduct in rescuing the Hungarian Koszta, from the shackles of the Austrians, in the port of Smyrna. The representatives of foreign nations, and the citizens of New York, were present, and the splendid hall was densely crowded, many ladies occupying seats in the galleries. French, Italian, German, Hungarian, Swiss, and Cuban exiles gathered in numbers to celebrate the anniversary of their respective revolutionary banners. The speeches were eloquent, and elicited much applause. They were delivered in French, Spanish, German, and Scandinavian. We publish this morning all reports of the meeting.

The Africa arrived at New York from Liverpool on Thursday evening, bringing files to the 10th inst., and the latest continental advices. The security of provisions indicated some very serious riots in the Italian States, and an attempt had been made to assassinate the Papal Legate at Ravenna. Commodore Vanderbilt had, unwittingly, incurred the sin of disturbing the political equilibrium of the world, by the sale of the *Empress* to the Emperor of Austria, and, perhaps, the religious meditations of His Holiness, the Pope, by appearing at Civita Vecchia in the North Star, upon the very morning that the Emperor expected to be crowned there. The police at first opposed his landing, as they viewed his large party with suspicion, but they were afterwards convinced of the pacific bearing of the gallant commander.

The attention of the French Government was attracted to the consideration of the food riots. A few trials were connected with the supply of corn, had occurred in the provinces. The *Paris Constitutionnel* discusses the Koszta difficulty in a long article, of which we give the leading points. The security of provisions indicated some very serious riots in the Italian States, and an attempt had been made to assassinate the Papal Legate at Ravenna. Commodore Vanderbilt had, unwittingly, incurred the sin of disturbing the political equilibrium of the world, by the sale of the *Empress* to the Emperor of Austria, and, perhaps, the religious meditations of His Holiness, the Pope, by appearing at Civita Vecchia in the North Star, upon the very morning that the Emperor expected to be crowned there. The police at first opposed his landing, as they viewed his large party with suspicion, but they were afterwards convinced of the pacific bearing of the gallant commander.

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